

Pachad David

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Maskil L'David

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitia**

One can get influenced if he desires it

"Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days" (Bereishit 49:1)

Chazal expounded in length upon the power of influence, for better or for worse. However, it is important to note that the power of influence can only be effective when there is a desire on both sides to cooperate – both the contributor and the recipient.

In order for words to penetrate the heart of the listener, the listener must be willing to be influenced. If he has no desire to change, then surely as much as the speaker will try, his words will not bear fruit because the receiving party does not want to accept them. It is like a man who is very thirsty and begs for some water. After it is placed before him, if he does not want to put the water in his mouth, then of course, he will remain thirsty even though the water is available and in front of him.

Regarding Yaakov Avinu, it says, (Micha 7:20) "Grant truth to Yaakov;" he was the greatest influence of truth. Nevertheless, Lavan the Arami did not get influenced by him for the good at all and remained a cunning swindler, despite living in close proximity. Why did Lavan not change his ways? Why was he not influenced by the pure, upright conduct of Yaakov Avinu?

The answer is that although Lavan witnessed and recognized Yaakov's righteousness, he did not desire to be influenced. He did not want to change and therefore closed his eyes to the truth. Similarly, we find the same thing regarding Eisav the Rasha, who grew up in the proximity of Yaakov Avinu, but yet persevered in his wickedness and was not positively affected. He, too, did not wish to change. He saw fit to continue in his evil ways. When there is no desire to become influenced to improve, then one will remain unaffected.

It says (Micha 7:20) "תתן אמת ליעקב" – Grant truth to Yaakov," and the first and last letters of אמת are תא which is a connecting word that connects between two things just like the "י" that connects between words. It implies – me and you together. When there is cooperation both by the contributor and the recipient, then they earn the letter "מ" in the middle of the word אמת. The letter "מ" signifies the Torah, which was given in forty days, and only through the cooperation of both parties, we become linked to the Torah. Otherwise, G-d forbid, we are left with the letters "מת" (dead), as Chazal say, "Either fellowship, or death." When there is no cooperation between the contributor and the recipient, then there is a severance. Therefore, only when the two wish to connect with the Torah, then the recipient will succeed in receiving it.

This clarifies the explanation of Chazal regarding the pasuk (Bereishit 49:1) "Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days."

Rashi states: "He attempted to reveal the End, but the Shechinah withdrew from him." Let us understand, why really did Heaven not agree to allow Yaakov to reveal the time of the Final Redemption? The answer is, because Hashem desires that the Redemption shall come in the merit of each and every individual, and not through Yaakov Avinu's revelation of the Final Redemption. When a Jew demonstrates his longing for the Redemption and draws closer to Torah and mitzvot, investing in spiritual pursuits and in heartfelt prayers, he hastens the Redemption.

Thus we find in the Redemption from Egypt that even though we were told in advance about the eventual Redemption, yet were it not for the prayers and the cries of the Jews, they would not have been redeemed, as it is stated (Shemot 2:23), "The Children of Israel groaned because of the work and they cried out," and only then it says, "Their outcry because of the work went up to G-d," and they merited Redemption. Everyone cried out together to Hashem in prayer to be redeemed, and each and every one prayed for the plight of their fellow, and then they were saved from exile in Egypt. Therefore, when Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal to his children the time of the Final Redemption without making it conditional with their willingness to change and without their prayers, Hashem did not let him. This is because in order to merit salvation, we must yearn for it and be willing to change. Then Am Yisrael will be influenced for the better, do teshuvah and be redeemed.

This parshah is called a "פרשה סתומה" (a "closed" parshah.) I would like to suggest that there is a lesson to be learned from this. Am Yisrael have to be disciplined to behave in an upright manner, and they must safeguard themselves completely from the influence of the Nations and from their immoral conduct. Am Yisrael may not seek to befriend the Nations and become like them. What can this be compared to? It is like an article made of pure silver. In order to prevent it from become tarnished and turning black, one must preserve it from the outside air and keep it in a closed cabinet.

How can we protect ourselves so that we should not become influenced negatively by our environment? This is possible only through Torah, which is called "תמא", and it possesses the strength and power to distance from a person all foreign and negative influences. This is the secret to Am Yisrael's success in persevering the exile of Egypt, as Chazal explain, that they guarded three things: They did not change their names, they did not change their language, and their did not change their style of dress. These precautions created a barrier between them and the Egyptian people so that they should not become influenced by their immoral way of life and their negative character traits.

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The Rambam

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22 – Rabbi Yaakov Hacohen Trab
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Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

One deal leads to another

Raising the Bar

When I sought to establish a yeshiva in Lyon, a city in France, I wanted to purchase a certain building to house our institution. But the cost of the structure was the astronomical sum of 700,000 francs, which we could ill afford. I was in my thirties then, and this sum was light-years away from anything I could imagine. I had no idea how in the world I would get it. As I took a tour through the building, the owner warned me that if I did not come the next day to sign a lease, he would not hold it for me but would go public.

I returned home, deep in worry over how to acquire the money. In my distress, I turned to Hashem, the One in control of everything, and spoke to Him like a child addresses his father. These were my words, "Ribbono shel Olam, You are great and rule over everything. I wish to build an edifice of Torah for Your sake. You know that I am not doing this for personal honor or acclaim, but for the honor of Your Torah, to raise soldiers for Your army and bring merit to the public. But I need a massive amount of money, which I have no clue how to get. There is no one who can block You from helping me. What are 700,000 francs to You? You can do anything!" I ended my personal prayer with a heartened feeling. I expected to see Hashem's salvation.

Out of tension, I could not sleep the entire night. Suddenly, at 5:00 a.m., the phone rang. A woman was on the other end, apologizing for the early hour. "I could not sleep all night long," she explained. "I have a number of gold bars in my possession, which I wish to sell at a profit. But so far, I have not found anyone appropriate to buy them and this disturbs me greatly. Please bless me that I find a buyer."

I was very surprised at this phone call at such an unusual hour. But I blessed her as she had requested, thinking how I would love to have such problems.

Fifteen minutes later, the phone rang again. This time,

it was an acquaintance. In general, I would be the one to approach him regarding various matters. Now the tables were turned. He related that he could not sleep.

"It seems like tonight is a night of wakefulness," I commented drily. "I myself could not sleep, and I just received a phone call from a woman who could not sleep. Now you are sharing the same sentiment. This is interesting." I related the incident with the woman on the line and her gold bars that kept her awake at night.

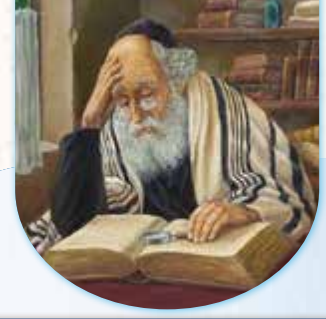
When he heard this, the man asked for details about her gold. Seeing his seriousness, I gave him her phone number so that they could talk directly. A short time later, the woman phoned again, stating that she wanted to come to my house together with this man and a lawyer to sign a contract between them.

Of course, I agreed. The three walked into my home. While the deal was being concluded, I allowed a sigh to escape my lips. Here they were, signing a contract regarding tremendous sums, while I had no clue as to how to acquire the money for the yeshiva building.

Suddenly, the woman handed me an envelope. She explained that she had vowed that if the deal came through, she would donate this sum to me. I opened it and to my delight, found the sum of 500,000 francs. I thanked Hashem for His kindness and eagerly awaited the arrival of the remaining 200,000 francs.

When I got to my office in the yeshiva, I found an envelope sitting on my desk. There were the remaining 200,000 francs, the donation of the man who had purchased the gold. With a happy heart and a prayer of thanks, I went to sign the lease.

This is how we obtained the building of the yeshiva in Lyon, from which Torah spreads throughout the world. From this place, tens of other Torah institutions were established throughout the world, bringing thousands back to Hashem in teshuvah.



Words of Our Sages

Tightening the belts? Not at the expense of the poor

"From Asher – his bread will have richness, and he will provide kingly delicacies" (Bereishit 49:20)

The Torah teaches us the correct way to conduct ourselves. This conduct was prevalent by Asher and we must learn to behave like him.

What was Asher's lofty practice?

It states, "His bread will have richness" – his desire for richness and delicacies was satisfied simply through a slice of bread. He did not require fine dining and expensive foods other than a slice of bread.

On the other hand, when "he will provide," – when he will seek to give charity for the poor, then "he will provide kingly delicacies" – he gave the finest and richest food.

This is the way every Jew should conduct himself. For himself he should live in a simple and modest fashion, but when providing for the needy, he should give the finest and richest quality.

A person may mistakenly believe that if he keeps the finest and richest items for himself and gives the cheaper inferior items to the poor, he will gain in this way and have more for himself. However, Chazal teach us that the exact opposite is true: "If a man sees that his livelihood is barely sufficient for him, he should give charity from it." Furthermore, we are told (Nachum 1:12) "For I have afflicted you; I will no longer afflict you" – he will no longer suffer from poverty.

The Maggid of Dubno explained this with a parable:

There was a rich man importing goods who once sailed on a ship loaded with merchandise. He also carried with him a case containing his tallit and tefillin and sefarim.

One day there was a storm at sea. The waves crashed over the deck and threatened to sink the ship. The captain notified the merchant that the cargo in the ship was too heavy and they would have to throw some of the cargo overboard; lest the ship sink to the depths of the sea.

The rich man hurried to his cabin and took his case containing his tallit and tefillin and prepared to throw them overboard in order to ease the burden of the ship...

His assistant asked him: Is it wise to choose precisely your small case containing your tallit and tefillin? After all, these are your most important possessions which have the power to protect you and save the entire contents on the ship?!

The analogy is as follows: When a person sees that his income is decreasing, and he is sinking into debt, what does he first cut? He does not cut the luxuries he is used to enjoying, but rather cuts the amount of charity that he used to give, as if in this way he will be saved. Chazal teach us, as we mentioned, that precisely by distributing charity one will achieve wealth, and this is the last thing that one should cut.

The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week:

"David's days drew near to die" (Melachim I, 2)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah describes the passing of David Hamelech and his will and testament to his son Shlomo. Likewise, the parashah describes the passing of Yaakov Avinu and his will and testament to his son Yosef.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Listening is permitted when protecting oneself

Just hearing lashon hara is prohibited by the Torah, even if he has no intention of believing it.

There is a difference between hearing and believing: Hearing is not prohibited unless it has no bearing on the future. But if he personally is affected by it, then if it is true, and he understands right from the start that the speaker wants to inform him that "such and such" is not a trustworthy person, and he was about to do business with him, or a shidduch with him, he is allowed to listen in order to beware and protect himself.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

As parents of children we use educational methods whose sole purpose is to educate and instruct our young children to serve Hashem and observe mitzvot. We surely are all familiar with the words of the Rem" a in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 124:7) who speaks about the father's role in education, which would include the personal example he must set in being meticulous to answer Amen. This is what he writes: "He should teach his young children to answer Amen, because as soon as his child answers Amen, he earns a portion in the World to Come."

A nice allusion to the words of the Rem" a appears in the sefer "Bnei Shelaishim" regarding the pasuk (Bereishit 42:20) "ואת אחיכם הקטן תביאו אלי ויאמנו דבריכם" – Then bring your youngest brother to me so your words will be verified," – which implies that a person should teach his young children to answer Amen, because as soon as his child answers Amen, he earns a portion in the World to Come.

There is another allusion brought in the "Yalkut Me'am Loez" (Esther 2:7) regarding the pasuk "ויהי אמן את הדסה היא אסתר בת דודו" – And he had reared Hadassah, she is Esther, his uncle's daughter" – the pasuk tells us how Mordechai raised Esther in her youth, inaugurating her in the ways of Hashem. As soon as she began to speak, he taught her to answer Amen, which is every parent's obligation to teach their children from youth. A child who knows how to speak, his father teaches him "תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב" – The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov," as well as, "שמע ישראל" – Hear, O Israel." When he gets bigger, his father teaches him some pesukim by heart and brings him to the Beit Haknesset and teaches him to answer Amen out loud. This way, if the child dies, G-d forbid, then the merit of answering Amen will grant him Resurrection in the future. This is what Mordechai intended when he taught Esther to answer Amen. As an allusion to this, the word נמוא (reared) is written without a "י" to spell נמא (Amen), which is what he taught her to answer from youth.

A good education from an early age

Many parents see it as their privilege to bring their young children to the Beit Haknesset where they absorb the sanctity of the prayers and the holiness of the Beit Haknesset. They should know that this is the most opportune time to instill in their young children adherence to answering Amen after the blessings of the shaliach tzibbur, and after the Kaddish. This is as presented in the sefer "Taharat Hakodesh Hakadmon" (part 2, chapter 5), "When the child begins to go to the Beit Haknesset, his father must instruct him in the Beit Haknesset about answering Amen and Kedushah, and about all other things concerning the Beit Haknesset."

To those who think that they first should let their child grow up and only then educate him to answering Amen, they are admonished in a sefer "Notzer Chessed" (Avot 3:11), "Always from youth, while he is still a child, [the parent] should educate him to fear Hashem according to his level and comprehension. They should not conduct themselves like stupid people who do not educate their child to fear [G-d], and say that there is time after he will grow up, then he will pray and answer Amen... instead he should educate his child mainly to fear [G-d] and should recite with him blessings and praise [of Hashem] according to his level, and he should train him to recite all the blessings clearly and to answer Amen."

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitia



The virtues of Menashe and Efraim

"And now, your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt shall be mine; Efraim and Menashe shall be mine like Reuvain and Shimon" (Bereishit 48:5)

Efraim and Menashe merited the blessing of Yaakov to be included as one of the holy Tribes. We did only Yosef's sons merit this and not any of the other children of the Tribes? Why not Yehudah, for example, who was the most prominent, or Yissachar, who symbolized Torah? What was so exceptional about Efraim and Menashe?

We must also understand why Yaakov Avinu blessed them to be especially like Reuvain and Shimon, and not like the other Tribes. After all, upon reflection we see that Reuvain, Shimon and Levi were not blessed like the rest of the Tribes. In fact, Yaakov rebuked them and said to Reuvain (Bereishit 49:4), "Water-like impetuosity – you cannot be foremost," and to Shimon he said (ibid. 49:7), "Accursed is their rage for it is intense." If so, why didn't he compare them to the Tribes who merited his blessings?

I would like to suggest, with siyatta d'Shemaya, that in fact all the holy Tribes and their children were exalted servants of Hashem, and they achieved lofty levels in holiness, purity and service of Hashem. However, there was a huge difference between them and between Yosef and his sons:

The other Tribes were privileged to live under the shadow of their great father, our holy ancestor, Yaakov Avinu, a" h, and were raised by him. They witnessed first-hand his holy conduct and learned from his good deeds and sanctity. It is obvious that one who is privileged to grow up in such a home, imbued with Torah and fear of Heaven, will absorb the same illumination of holiness.

Therefore, Yosef the Tzaddik and his children, who grew up in the foreign land of Egypt, sunk in immorality and abomination and lived in an atmosphere dominated by heresy and idolatry – they overcame the most difficult challenges to their spirituality. Moreover, Yosef the Tzaddik did not have spare time to invest in his son's pure education, because the entire land of Egypt depended upon him during the years of famine to provide for their needs. Certainly, without pure and thorough education, Yosef's sons could have easily been drawn after the corrupt environment of Egypt. Nevertheless, they went against the tide and guarded themselves and their Judaism meticulously. They served Hashem, the G-d of Israel, in sanctity and perfectly with all their might, without the assistance of Yosef, their father, and Yaakov, their grandfather. Thus, Menashe and Efraim were considered greater than the other children of the Tribes, and only they merited becoming Tribes like Reuvain and Shimon.

From this we can learn how great is the virtue of one who desists the temptations of the evil inclination and withstands all his challenges, despite growing up in an environment which is alienated from Judaism – yet he makes sure to safeguard himself from all the ills of the evil inclination, scrupulously guarding his eyes and connecting with all his might to Torah and mitzvot. Certainly, such a person is more important in Hashem's Eyes than someone else who grew and was raised in a house imbued with fear of Heaven and sanctity, because the first example achieves greatness through hard work and much effort, as it says, "The reward is in proportion to the exertion," and Hashem grants him his full reward.



זכור לטוב

From the teachings of Eliyahu Hanavi

Why did Eliyahu merit resurrecting the dead?

Because he did the will of the Holy One Blessed Be He, and lamented over the (lack of) honor of the Holy One Blessed Be He and the honor of Israel all the time; and it was by him as if the enemies of Israel had vanished from the world.

In each and every generation that Eliyahu would find people that were tzaddikim; immediately he would embrace, hug and kiss them and he would bless, exalt, praise, magnify and sanctify to the Name of He who said "let there be a world".

Why did Elisha merit resurrecting two dead people?

Because he did the will of He who said "let there be a world".

From where do we know this?

Know that it is so, for when the Holy Spirit said to Eliyahu, "Go, return on your way, and go to the Wilderness of Damascus etc. and you shall anoint Yehu the son of Nimshi

as king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel- meholah as a prophet in your stead etc. so he went forth from there and came upon Elisha son of Shaphat while he was plowing, twelve pairs [of oxen] going before him etc. so Eliyahu went over to him and cast his mantle upon him" (Kings I 19:15-19), and immediately Elisha abandoned all he had and ran after Eliyahu, as it is written: "He left the oxen and ran after Eliyahu etc." (ibid. 19:20), and immediately he abandoned all he had and sowed his field salt (left it desolate), as it is stated "he turned back from following him; he took a pair of oxen and slaughtered them etc. He then arose and went after Eliyahu and served him" (ibid. 19:21), it does not say "he learned from him" but rather "he served him", from here they said, "The service of Torah (of talmidei chachamim) is greater than the study of Torah".

From here they said, a person should part from his friend only with a matter of halachah, in order that it shall be said, "so and so should be remembered for good for he established this halachah", as it is stated "as they were walking and conversing" (ibid. II 2:11); speaking of words ("conversing") refers only to Torah, as it is written "Behold, My word is

like fire – the word of Hashem" (Yirmiyahu 23:29).

And when the angel was sent to Eliyahu and Elisha in order to take Eliyahu from the world; he arrived and found them engaged in the words of Torah. He said before Him, Master of the World! They are engaged in the words of Torah and I do not have any power over them, as it is stated: "Behold! – a chariot of fire and horses of fire [appeared] and separated between the two of them" (ibid.), "a chariot of fire" refers to words of Torah, Prophets and Writings, "horses of fire" refers to Mishnah, halachot and aggadot. "Fire" refers to Torah as it is written, "The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul" (Psalms 19:8).

"Why does it say "and separated between the two of them", for the angel returned and said before the Holy One Blessed Be He, "Master of the World! I did for You spiritual bliss in the world, let it be enough that I disgraced them and pushed them one to this side and one to this side, thus it is stated "and separated between the two of them" .

From here they learned: Two people that are traveling on the way and engage in the words of Torah – no bad thing can have power over them, as it is stated, ""as they were walking and conversing".



Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto

Requesting Poverty

The following story is popular among the Jews of Agadir. They relate that at the peak of the holy day of Yom Kippur, when Rabbi Khalifa was in the Beit Hakeneset immersed in fasting and prayer, several ships laden with merchandise belonging to the Rav arrived at the port of Agadir.

Rabbi Khalifa was worried that the gentile merchants would soon seek

him out and trouble him with business matters. He immediately gathered his strength and prayed fervently to Hashem, begging Him, the Omnipotent, to sink all his ships with their precious cargo at sea, so that the holy day should not be violated because of him.

The supplications of the tzaddik were accepted. In front of the unbelieving eyes and accompanied by the shouts of the dock workers and merchants witnessing the scene, the ships inex-

plicably sank into the depths of the sea. From then on, the wheel of Rabbi Khalifa's fortune turned for the worse, since he had lost all his merchandise, and he became destitute.

It is fascinating to hear the testimony of the Jews of Agadir, who live in the port city. They testify that under certain weather conditions, when the sea is at its lowest point, it is possible to discern the masts of Rabbi Khalifa's ships protruding from the bottom of the harbor.